

Item 6. Consideration of Future Opportunities, initiatives and possibilities for raising awareness of the Declaration and ensuring its practical implementation

The UN Declaration on Minorities and the post-2015 Development Agenda

The post-2015 development agenda is currently being formulated to build on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Forum could make a useful contribution to this new agenda, including through strengthening the recommendations on development.

Further research is needed on the impact of the MDGs on minorities and the degree to which they have helped or harmed minority groups. Available evidence indicates that minorities have not benefited equally from the MDGs activities to date. Moreover, the economic and social marginalisation of minorities in the Global North countries has been ignored in these global development initiatives.

In 2007, the Independent Expert on Minority Issues conducted a study of the existing MDGs reports. The study examined the extent to which minorities had been included in these reports and by inference, in national MDGs strategies. The study of 50 state reports found that ethnic or linguistic minorities were mentioned in only 19 reports, mostly on education, whilst religious minorities were mentioned in only two of the reports. No report mentioned minorities under each of the eight Goals.

Examples of some good practice are also in evidence. For example, Vietnam and Thailand adopted MDGs plus indicators to measure the progress of ethnic minorities towards the Goals. In Ecuador, the UN Country Team prepared a specific report on the MDGs and People of African Descent.

The UNDM in article 4.5 calls on States to “consider appropriate measures so that persons belonging to minorities may participate fully in the economic progress and development in their country”. Similarly, article 5 indicates that both national policies and programmes and those of cooperation among states “should be planned and implemented with due regard for the legitimate interests of persons belonging to minorities.” These provisions require states to ensure minorities have a fair share of development benefits and to be respectful of different priorities in development that minority groups may express.

In light of these standards, I would like to urge the Forum to include the following four recommendations:

1. States should review progress made by marginalised minority groups in relation to each of the MDGs. The findings of these reviews should be used in the preparation of new strategies and budgets for development under the post-2015 framework.
2. UN agencies should support governments in evaluating the impact of MDGs policies on minorities. UN agencies can offer technical cooperation on minority rights standards to governments in the preparation of new strategies under the post-2015 framework and more generally in human rights impact assessments.
3. The post-2015 framework should restate the commitments of the Millennium Declaration, paragraph 25, on the protection of minority rights. The new framework should reflect minority rights standards, including mechanisms for participation of minorities in decision-making on development that affects them.
4. The post-2015 framework should include indicators that will monitor the progress of minorities towards the new global goals on development. These indicators should include analysis of intersecting forms of discrimination. This data should be collected in a manner that is consistent with the rights of minorities.

Thank you Madame Chair.

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